

**City University of Hong Kong  
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Information Systems  
with effect from Semester A 2022 / 2023**

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**Part I Course Overview**

**Course Title:** Foundations of Information Systems Research

**Course Code:** IS8002

**Course Duration:** One Semester (13 weeks)

**Credit Units:** 3

**Level:** R8

**Medium of Instruction:** English

**Medium of Assessment:** English

**Prerequisites:**  
(Course Code and Title) Nil

**Precursors:**  
(Course Code and Title) Nil

**Equivalent Courses:**  
(Course Code and Title) Nil

**Exclusive Courses:**  
(Course Code and Title) Nil

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

This course covers the foundations of Information Systems research covering an overview of the discipline, introducing basics of research, and reviewing emerging research topics.

On completing the course, students should be able to:

- Appreciate how the Information Systems discipline has evolved, and the current state of the discipline
- Acquire basic research skills (e.g., identify literature gaps, conduct literature review, write critical reviews, and select appropriate research methods)
- Review and evaluate research papers in the discipline
- Understand the journal review process in the discipline and how to publish in high quality journals of the discipline
- Identify different types of research topics and methodologies in the discipline
- Demonstrate critical understanding of the literature specific to their chosen area of research, and identify research gaps from selected the selected area
- Show familiarity with the central aspects of the area of research within which they propose to undertake their PhD study.

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

No.	CILOs	Weighting	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Acquire basic skills in conducting research in the discipline of Information Systems	30%		✓	
2.	Demonstrate abilities to evaluate papers in the discipline of Information Systems	20%	✓		
3.	Demonstrate critical thinking and analytical ability in evaluating critical literature specific to their chosen area of research, leading to the development of a research proposal.	50%	✓	✓	✓
		100%			

A1: *Attitude*

*Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.*

A2: *Ability*

*Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.*

A3: *Accomplishments*

*Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.*

### 3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.			Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	
Class Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Literature review</i>: Students will conduct literature review on a selected topic and present their findings in groups. Instructor and students will discuss trends and development of the selected topic over time.</li> <li>• <i>In-class discussion</i>: Instructors and students will have interactive discussion on selected papers to understand current trends in Information Systems research</li> <li>• <i>Debate</i>: Students will debate on a selected topic related to Information Systems research in class</li> <li>• <i>Critical reviews</i>: Students will evaluate selected papers related to Information Systems and brainstorm possible new research topics</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	3 hours per week.

#### 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.			Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3		
<b>Continuous Assessment: 100%</b>					
<p><b><u>AT1: Group Assignments</u></b>            Students have to form a group, read selected research papers, summarize and provide critiques on the papers, conduct literature research on selected topics, propose debate topics and convene debates in class, and summarize insights learnt from class discussions.</p>	✓	✓	✓	50%	Final scores will be adjusted based on individual contributions to a group.
<p><b><u>AT2: Literature Review for Research Proposal</u></b>            Each student has to prepare a report proposing and motivating a research topic, a review of literature (including existing research and relevant theories) pertinent to their proposed research topic, leading to the development of a research proposal specific to their chosen area of research. They are required to motivate a research topic, read the relevant literature, and provide a written critique in the form of a literature analysis that demonstrates their critical thinking and analytical ability in evaluating the literature specific to his/her chosen area of research. He/she has to present the proposal in class and handle criticisms from the peers.</p>	✓	✓	✓	30%	
<p><b><u>AT3: Individual Short Exercises</u></b>            Short exercises are conducted in class and take-home assignments. Students have to answer short questions related to class topics, research on the topics, and organize their answers in a formal report.</p>	✓	✓		10%	
<p><b><u>AT4: In-Class Discussion and Participation</u></b>            Each student should participate in class discussions, read selected papers, share their viewpoints on selected class topics, and discuss with the peers in class.</p>	✓	✓	✓	10%	Note that attendance is not participation. The activity is evaluated based on the quality of contributions in the discussions.
				100%	

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

Applicable to students admitted in Semester A 2022/23 and thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
Group Assignments	[CILOs 1-3] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capability to conduct literature review based on selected topics</li> <li>• Ability to summarize and present research findings in an orderly manner</li> <li>• Propose appropriate debate/discussion topics based on selected papers and convene the debates/discussions in an orderly manner</li> <li>• Ability to effectively describe and evaluate assigned papers, and propose possible topics for future extension</li> <li>• Summarize and highlight important learning insights derived from class debates/discussions</li> </ul>	High	Significant	Moderate	Not even reaching marginal levels
Research Proposal	[CILOs 1] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capability to effectively analyse and critique the literature specific to the student's chosen area of research</li> <li>• Ability to highlight important research gaps after literature review</li> <li>• Propose a new research topic after identifying research gaps and suggest appropriate research methods related to the topic</li> </ul>	High	Significant	Moderate	Not even reaching marginal levels
Individual Short Exercise	[CILOs 1,2] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capability to conduct literature search to answer in the short exercise.</li> <li>• Ability to demonstrate a good understanding of Information Systems literature, and good critical thinking and analytical ability in evaluating the literature.</li> <li>• Capability to summarize related information in an orderly manner</li> </ul>	High	Significant	Moderate	Not even reaching marginal levels
In-Class Discussion and Participation	[CILOs 1-3] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be proactive and interactive in class discussion</li> <li>• Capability to brainstorm new research ideas on selected topics</li> <li>• Ability to demonstrate critical thinking and evaluate opinions of peers in class discussions</li> </ul>	High	Significant	Moderate	Not even reaching marginal levels

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
Group Assignments	[CILOs 1-3] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capability to conduct literature review based on selected topics</li> <li>• Ability to summarize and present research findings in an orderly manner</li> <li>• Propose appropriate debate/discussion topics based on selected papers and convene the debates/discussions in an orderly manner</li> <li>• Ability to effectively describe and evaluate assigned papers, and propose possible topics for future extension</li> <li>• Summarize and highlight important learning insights derived from class debates/discussions</li> </ul>	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
Research Proposal	[CILOs 1] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capability to effectively analyse and critique the literature specific to the student's chosen area of research</li> <li>• Ability to highlight important research gaps after literature review</li> <li>• Propose a new research topic after identifying research gaps and suggest appropriate research methods related to the topic</li> </ul>	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
Individual Short Exercise	[CILOs 1,2] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capability to conduct literature search to answer in the short exercise.</li> <li>• Ability to demonstrate a good understanding of Information Systems literature, and good critical thinking and analytical ability in evaluating the literature.</li> <li>• Capability to summarize related information in an orderly manner</li> </ul>	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
In-Class Discussion and Participation	[CILOs 1-3] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be proactive and interactive in class discussion</li> <li>• Capability to brainstorm new research ideas on selected topics</li> <li>• Ability to demonstrate critical thinking and evaluate opinions of peers in class discussions</li> </ul>	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels

## Part III Other Information

### 1. Keyword Syllabus

Epistemology, positivism, interpretivism, literature review, critical reviews, methodology, quantitative research, qualitative research, triangulation of research methods, theories, information systems, IT artefacts, history of information systems, design science, behavioural research, economics, analytical modelling, econometrics, explanatory and predictive models, human computer interaction (HCI), strategic information systems, research contributions, IS identity crisis, IT productivity paradox, IS business value, and IT nomological net

### 2. Reading List

#### 2.1 Compulsory Readings

1.	Nil
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#### 2.2 Additional Readings

1.	Seminar specific readings list will be provided in the course.
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